

EXHIBIT 9  
DATE 2-19-09  
HB HB 455

House Bill 455  
February 19, 2009  
Presented by Chris Hunter  
House Local Government Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Chris Hunter, Chief of Fisheries of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

Montana is known for our wild trout fisheries. People from all over the world come to Montana to fish the ten rivers included in this bill because they are recognized world wide as providing tremendous wild trout fisheries. Wild trout are dependent upon good habitat for spawning, rearing and providing good growth. The riparian zone is a critical component of that wild trout habitat. The measures in this bill would protect these riparian areas and ensure that the habitat that supports our wild trout fisheries will remain in good condition into the future.

In addition to the fishery benefits, these intact riparian areas provide more habitat for more wildlife species than any other habitat type in Montana. They also provide important migration corridors for many species.

For these reasons the Department supports this bill.